

Message Text

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17

ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 INR-05 L-01 H-02 PA-01 PM-03

PRS-01 SP-02 CIAE-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 EB-03 ACDA-10

OMB-01 MC-01 /056 W

----- 034348

R 060520Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1123

INFO CHUSMTM DHAHRAN

SECDEF WASHDC

CSAF WASHDC

S E C R E T JIDDA 3176

LIMDIS

E.O.: 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, SA

SUBJ: FOLLOW-ON FIGHTER FOR SAUDI AIR FORCE

1. WE NOTE FROM PRESS ACCOUNTS THAT THE U.S. NAVY HAS MADE A PRELIMINARY CHOICE OF THE F-18 AS ITS LIGHT WEIGHT FIGHTER, THE CHOICE TO BE CONTINGENT UPON CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL AND FUNDING. IF THE NAVY STICKS TO THIS CHOICE AND IT IS APROVED, IT COULD HAVE A BEARING ON THE SAG CHOICE OF ITS FOLLOW-ON FIGHTER TO THE F5E.

2. WE FULLY APPRECIATE THE NUMBER OF IMPONDERABLES AT THIS TIME, BUT TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE ANSWERS TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

A) IF THE F-18 IS CHOSEN BY THE NAVY AND GOES INTO PRODUCTION DOES THIS MEAN THAT THE F-17 IS ALSO LIKELY TO BE PRODUCED OR THAT IT COULD BE PRODUCED AT A COMPETITIVE PRICE?

B) IF THE F-17 CAN BE COMPETITIVELY PRODUCED AND THE SAG
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WERE INTERESTED IN BUYING IT, WHAT IS A REASONABLE,

THOUGH NOT OVERLY OPTIMISTIC, ESTIMATE OF THE TIME IN
WHICH DELIVERIES COULD BE PROMISED?

C) HOW SOON IS IT REASONABLE TO EXPECT A FINAL DECISION
AS TO THE NAVY CHOICE?

3. WE BELIEVE THAT WE MUST HAVE THE ANSWERS TO THESE
QUESTIONS BEFORE WE CAN CONSIDER TALKING TO THE SAUDIS
ABOUT THEIR INTEREST IN THE FOLLOW-ON FIGHTER, OR ABOUT
ANY MEASURES TO FILL THE GAP WHEN THE LIGHTENINGS ARE PHASED
OUT.

AKINS

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NNN

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